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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY USSR

SUBJECT Student Attitudes Toward Current Issues/Observations
on "Komsomolskaya Pravda", the Soviet School
System, Soviet Shops and StoresPLACE ACQUIRED
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1. Q. Did the Soviet youth of the non-official variety whom you met hold any fresh or controversial viewpoints opposed to or different from what passes for the current Party line?
 - A. I noticed slight degrees of variance from the norm but nothing startling. They would always say, "I speak for all Soviet youth", and could never understand why we always replied, "I speak for myself only."
2. Q. What is their true thinking either pro or con the Party line on:
 - a. Stalin?
 - A. I got the overall impression that Stalin is a great hero. I heard no contrary views on this subject.
 - b. The new regime and its leading personalities?
 - A. Very little was said about this. I asked students at Moscow University whether they read Stalin and Lenin in their courses, and then asked what Malenkov had written. The answer was, "Nothing, but you must remember that Malenkov is not a theorist of the Party." The student who answered was not being derogatory toward Malenkov. He was just trying to straighten out my thinking.
 - c. The so-called new economic look?
 - A. They admit a tremendous problem in the agricultural and consumer goods fields. They say that their government is cognizant of this and is working to improve the situation. A director of a wool factory in Tbilisi

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remarked to me that undoubtedly we in the US had better clothing, but that the USSR was working to correct this. The interpreter translated his remark faithfully according to one of the group who understood a little Russian.

d. Soviet foreign policy, particularly with respect to Germany and the Korean war and truce?

A. Very little was said about Germany. Their attitude about Korea was the stock argument that South Korea started the war with the help of the US.

e. The "H" bomb?

A. I didn't even discuss the "A" bomb with anyone.

f. War?

A. Everyone in the USSR talked about peace. One of our group asked whether war was coming. A student answered that none would start for five or six years. We asked why in that length of time. The student was rather startled but answered after a slight delay that the US would be too weak to start a war until then. He said that our weakness had been demonstrated in Korea.

g. The purge of Beria?

A. The prevailing attitude was that Beria got exactly what he had coming to him. They told us that he had tried to pit one nationality against another to weaken the USSR and build up his own strength. Nothing was said about his dealing traitorously with the West. I think that the Soviet people are sincerely glad to be rid of Beria and his sinister influence.

h. Nationalism?

A. I noticed no particular indications of nationalism. There was a very intense civic pride in Leningrad, much more so than elsewhere. We were repeatedly asked which we liked better, Moscow or Leningrad.

i. The US, the UK, France?

A. Very little was said about the UK and France. Generally speaking, I think that they liked the average US citizen but not the US Government and the so-called "Trusts".

j. President Eisenhower?

A. The attitude was that Eisenhower is only one man, not the Government of the US. They seemed to believe that he is controlled by the "Trusts" and "Wall Street".

k. The Komsomols?

A. I can't remember any particular comments on the organization, although the Komsomol members seem to be a little more imbued with the Party line.

l. The Soviet Army?

A. I don't recall any particular discussion on this subject.

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3. Q. What questions regarding the US were most frequently asked?

A. There were four stock questions which the State Department had warned us to expect. They were asked everywhere we went. In addition, there were a couple of others which were asked quite frequently. The questions in the order of their frequency were:

- a. Why was Paul Robeson refused a passport to receive the Stalin Peace Prize?
- b. Why is the US encircling the USSR with air bases?
- c. Why were visas denied the Soviet chess players?
- d. Why was there a Korean war?
- e. Do US students get jobs after they graduate?
- f. [REDACTED]

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4. Q. In connection with the above, where did their real interest from an informative point of view seem to lie?

A. The things that they were most concerned with were the availability of jobs and scholarships. Most of the students at Moscow University seemed to be primed with the questions I listed above, but outside of Moscow this didn't seem to be so true. Occasionally we caught them off guard and then their questions were more to the point and seemed to be more clearly of interest to them.

5. Q. Did any Soviet youth whom you met express a desire to visit the US?

A. We asked this question repeatedly. No one ever said "no". They always said that they would like to come but that the US Government would never grant them a visa. We remarked to this that it was quite possible that their government wouldn't give them a passport and asked how many Soviet students had ever asked for a US visa. We never heard of anyone who had.

6. Q. To what extent does "Komsomolskaya Pravda" decide what stories and articles it will run on its own initiative and to what extent on directives from above?

A. We didn't ascertain this exactly. We asked who determined policy at every paper which we visited. At "Komsomolskaya Pravda" we were told that the editorial board of ten people determined this policy.

7. Q. Were classes conducted in Russian in the Ukraine? At what grades in school and college was the Russian language a compulsory subject?

A. I'm not certain about the Ukraine but in Georgia, classes were conducted in Georgian. Students must learn Georgian, Russian, and a foreign language. Because of the necessity for learning Russian, the normal ten year course is lengthened to 11 years. The ten year course is supposed to be the norm for all of the USSR but in parts of the country only seven years are required at this time.

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Russian is studied from the second class or year. They start school at seven so this instruction begins at the age of eight. They start their foreign language in the third class. History is studied for eight years.

8. Q. Had the shops in Moscow and outside recently increased their assortment of consumer goods?

A. The stocks in the shops seemed to be abundant. The shops were crowded and I saw very few lines waiting to buy. The people seemed to be looking rather than buying in the luxury shops selling jewelry, etc, but otherwise they were doing a fair amount of buying. I was really amazed in all the cities I visited at the business being done. The goods were more attractively displayed outside of Moscow, and in Leningrad the displays were almost western in appearance. Even old Tbilisi had some attractive window displays.

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